

#### IOWA RUNNERS-UP

##### Poetry

Jude Borrromeo, age 8, West Des Moines, *The Bright Sun*

Jacob Lowe, age 11, Dysart, *My Video Game*

Sarah McMurtry, age 13, Strawberry Point, *The Life of Leaves*

Blaine Herington, age 17, Davenport, *The Wondrous Forest*

##### Art

Sarah Clawson, age 11, Ankeny, *Testing the Waters*

Chelsey Frank, age 13, Ames, *A Bird of the Marshland: The  
Purple Galinule*

Josh Byrne, age 16, Davenport, *Ode to Odonata*

#### IOWA HONORABLE MENTIONS

##### Poetry

Ciara Haase, age 8, West Des Moines, *Palm Trees*

Racheal Heaston, age 8, West Des Moines, *Maple Trees*

Avery Anderson, age 10, Stratford, *Bumble Bee*

Bailey Leyser, age 10, Grimes, *A Field*

Farah Lee, age 13, Knoxville, *Giant Tree*

Micaiah Cvrk, age 15, Sioux City, *Apples*

Srehita Kotla, age 15, Urbandale, *You are Like the Trees*

##### Art

Christine Housken, age 9, Lehigh, *Fishing*

Mathias Chamberlain, age 9, Dubuque, *Under Water Ocean Scene*

Brody Hansen, age 10, Harcourt, *Lake*

Danielle Oberfoell, age 10, West Des Moines, *The Flower Garden*

Cameron Liston, age 12, Knoxville, *The Casual Fish*

Colby De Road, age 13, Knoxville, *Abandon Ship*

Brooke Hartman, age 14, Urbandale, *Uniques Fleur Jaune*

Claire Waterman, age 15, Davenport, *Drops of Life*

Gabby Hoeksema, age 16, Davenport, *Depth*

Sarah Sitz, age 16, Davenport, *Water: the life sustainer*

Kelsey Lyons, age 17, West Des Moines, *Spoonfill of Sunshine*

Every year, River of Words® conducts an international environmental poetry and art competition for youth aged 5 to 19 in grades K-12, in affiliation with the Library of Congress Center for the Book. This free contest is designed to help young people explore the natural environment and cultural history of the place they live and to express what they discover through poetry and art. Iowa entries not chosen as finalists or grand-prize winners in the international contest are returned to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, where they are judged in a statewide competition.

The IOWATER Volunteer Water Monitoring Program of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources coordinates the River of Words® Iowa Environmental Poetry and Art Competition. This year, over 329 students from Iowa entered the contest through their schools, community art centers, community groups, or on their own. The Iowa entries are evaluated by a panel of judges, and the top works in each category are selected to be included in an exhibit that will travel around the state for the coming year. This year's exhibit includes 39 works of poetry and art by talented Iowa students.

We hope you enjoy these efforts by Iowa's youth to explore and understand our environment and to express their experiences through art and poetry.

**IOWATER**

Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring

Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources  
109 Trowbridge Hall  
Iowa City, IA 52242-1319

[www.iowadnr.com/riverofwords](http://www.iowadnr.com/riverofwords)

**IOWATER**

presents the  
**2012**

**RIVER of WORDS®**

Environmental

# Poetry & Art International Contest



**IOWA WINNERS**

## Backyard Creek

The water runs, bubbling over stones  
Worn smooth from years of sliding and slipping  
of water so cool.  
It whispers and giggles and tells its own story;  
tip-toeing and spinning and swirling away.  
The backyard creek...  
A graceful ballerina  
An athletic marathoner  
A mother to all creatures, above, in, and under.  
The Heron, sleekly diving in to fish.  
The Beaver, a pioneer, carpenter, and architect.  
The Otter, so smooth and strong.  
The Frogs and Toads, hopping on along.  
The Worms, so slimy and small.  
There are so many creatures, I could never cover them all.  
The backyard creek...  
So majestic and pure.  
It's striking contrast to mud and snow  
and so many other things we will never know.  
So now you have seen  
How wonderful and complete the world of the backyard creek  
can be.

IOWA WINNER  
Grades 10-12 Poetry  
Justeen Schoner  
Age 16  
Des Moines, Iowa  
*Backyard Creek*

Cover Art  
IOWA WINNER  
Grades 7-9 Art  
Ashley Hambrick  
Age 14  
Windsor Heights, Iowa  
*The Bobcat*



IOWA WINNER  
Grades 4-6 Art  
Kurt Sernett  
Age 12  
Kelley, Iowa  
*White Water Lily*

## The Moment Before Night

Sunset is a distant fire in dark lands  
with trees that are fingers clawing out of the earth.  
Ducks whistle overhead – or is that the wind in the trees?

A beaver crawls on some logs in the middle of the lake.  
It slaps its tail on the water as if to stay balanced.  
Ducks begin to land.

Their wings say dapple dapple dapple as they touch the water.  
The grass smells of dry wheat.  
Everything is calm, anticipating night.

IOWA WINNER  
Grades 4-6 Poetry  
Theo Prineas  
Age 11  
Iowa City, Iowa  
*The Moment Before Night*

## Waterfall

In the wilderness there is a waterfall,  
Thrashing, rashing, rushing waterfall  
Water rushing rapidly, thundering  
Down the large waterfall.

IOWA WINNER  
Grades K-3 Poetry  
Micah De Boer  
Age 8  
North Liberty, Iowa  
*Waterfall*



IOWA WINNER  
Grades K-3 Art  
Zoe Scott  
Age 6  
Iowa City, Iowa  
*Lily Pad in River*

## Bird-banding

In a clearing in the forest  
With thick trees to one side,  
We stood inside a circle of benches.

Before one of the black-capped chickadees flew  
Into our mist net,  
We heard them calling out to each other.

They have many calls;  
I always thought they had just one –  
Chicka-dee-dee-dee.  
That was the call I thought they had.

As we gathered there,  
Meredith went and lifted the chickadee from the net,  
And brought it to us.

We banded the small bird  
With a size zero band  
And then passed the tiny creature  
Around the circle.

The chickadee lay still on its back  
As it was passed  
From child to child.

The chickadee flew  
Just one child away from me in the circle.  
It was beautiful the way it glided so smoothly upwards  
To the small branch of a tree.

The next bird we caught was a dark-eyed junco,  
And all the kids who had not had a turn to hold the chickadee  
Got to touch the junco.

It was amazing to see the birds up so close,  
And to pet so softly, with just one finger,  
The delicate feathers on the junco's head.

IOWA WINNER  
Grades 7-9 Poetry  
Ayla Canin  
Age 12  
Iowa City, Iowa  
*Bird-banding*



IOWA WINNER  
Grades 10-12 Art  
Annie Delleman  
Age 16  
Davenport Central High School  
Davenport, Iowa  
*Colors of the Sea*